

1997, the said amendment, was effected by promulgating the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997 (No. 13 of 1997).

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, this bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha but it could not be passed there. I want to know whether the bill is likely to be introduced afresh?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Yes, this bill is being introduced afresh.

18.26 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Need for Streamlining the Public Distribution System—Contd.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, we resume the discussion regarding Public Distribution System. Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say about the discussion being held under Rule 193 in regard to the need for streamlining and making the Public Distribution System more effective and for this purpose we need a proper monitoring system in the respective Ministries urgently at the Central and State Level so that this system could be made more effective. The Hon'ble Minister should hold a meeting periodically with the officials concerned for the monitoring of this system once or twice a month about the requirements of the States, as well as the supply made to them as per their requirements, the quantity of foodgrains provided to different States and Kerosene or sugar provided to them along with the stock of foodgrains available in the F.C.I. godowns in the concerned States. During the festival season they have to supply additional quantity of foodgrains, otherwise they would have to face a serious problem.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I belong to the family of farmers and I have been brought up in rural atmosphere. One has to walk about 2-3 kms. to reach gram panchayat or its head office, where Fair Price Shop is located and there on his arrival he is told that sugar and wheat are

not available at the shop. He visits there 3-4 times and gets disappointed at last but one day he is told that the sugar stock which had arrived sometimes back was now out of stock. As a result thereof he has to purchase sugar and kerosene in black market. His family has even been deprived of the light of 'Chimni' Lamp Light. I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister through you that to avoid such a situation, uniform distribution system is required for the people living below the poverty line of this country who have to work hard whole day to earn their livelihood. If he has to purchase everything in the black market, then it would be very difficult for him. Therefore, I would like the Government to have an effective monitoring system.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, in the past there was a crisis in Rajasthan. Our Food Minister met the Union Minister of Food. ...*(Interruptions)*. . . I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister as he is busy in discussion with Panigrahi ji, we request him to look into my State's position sympathetically. Our Food Minister of Rajasthan came here and met several Food Ministers of other States alongwith Food Secretary and held discussions about the recently launched new system called T.P.D.S under which 5 kgs. of wheat or other Food items are distributed at half the rates to every person living below the poverty line.

Sir, the card holders became agitated after hearing about this scheme under which each family will get only five kgs of foodgrains, whether it has five, six or ten family members. Therefore, a clarification was sought from the Food Supply Officer of the district. Then the Minister of Food told that their order was to provide ten kgs of foodgrains to each ration card holder. Sir, I would like to know from the Government through you whether it is justified to give only 10 kgs of foodgrains in a month to a family which has a total of 10-15 members which included grandmother, mother, children, son, daughter-in-law, daughter etc. Ever since the Janata Party took over, people developed more taste for wheat in the villages. Otherwise, when I was too young, we used to eat maize, millet etc. and on festivals only we used to have wheat. I remember this since my childhood. But with the inception of Janata rule in 1977 the taste of the people changed with the result that they started consuming more wheat alongwith coarse grains. Now, even when the production of wheat in our country has increased and we have become self dependent on this front, you are supplying just 10 kgs of wheat at half the price through Public Distribution System. And for the rest of the consumption people have to purchase foodgrains from the market where at present the prices of these items are almost same or there is a marginal difference but in future when the market prices will increase after some time then it will be difficult for them to purchase foodgrains from there.

[Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat]

So this vague policy will not be tolerated as nobody will be satisfied with such a meagre allocation. You have implemented it immediately to get an applause from the public.

There is nothing united in this United Front Government. The then Prime Minister and the then Minister of Food who brought this policy, have gone. At present new Minister of Food has come in his place. He has got independent charge and we hope that he would try to get information at his own level whether half priced wheat is actually available or not at the Fair Price Shops and whether it is reaching the poor due to non-availability of foodgrains and sugar etc. a problem has cropped up. It is a month of 'Shravana' in which there are festivals of 'Tej', 'Janmashtami', 'Rakshabandhan' and eating 'Ghevars' and on such an occasion sugar would be available after this month and availability of which would be announced by the Sub-divisional officer that sugar for this month is available and consumers are required to take it by such and such date. Now suppose somebody does not have the money, then he cannot celebrate the festivals. What is the use if Doctor arrives after the patient is dead. Therefore, there is a need to give it a special thought. There is a need to increase the quantity. There is a need to make timely supply of the consumer items. The other thing which I want to mention is commission. Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, many a times foodgrains are available in godowns but T.P.D.S. shopkeepers do not lift it saying that they get meagre commission, and they incur heavy losses. They also complain that they do not get good quality wheat because that is wet or has been eaten by insects, mice etc. or it has been affected by some other disease. Therefore, wherever there is such spoiled wheat, it should be got checked in advance. At least foodgrains fit for consumption should be supplied to those shops which are distributing the same.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a scheme of Mid-day-meal is also being implemented in the villages. Mid-day-Meal is not prepared in Primary Schools for children. Instead, the children of Primary Schools, who secure 80% attendance in a month are given three kilograms of wheat per month. That wheat is also not lifted by them for four-five months. Later on, it is not available even at shops also. Since that also relates with this distribution system, they also take it from the fair price shops. Fair Price Shop holders say that they do not have so much stock for supplying to schools but only for these units which are already registered here. Hence, there is a problem regarding lifting of foodgrains for the Mid-day-Meal scheme from the food godowns. I therefore, request you to do something to maintain the effectiveness of Public Distribution system.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please conclude.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would conclude my speech after making one last point. I am sorry about Australian wheat. Our farmers have made our country self sufficient in respect of foodgrains by bringing green revolution in this regard. When Lal Bahadur Shastriji gave the slogan of 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' revealing the self respect, and called for 'Vijaya Vrata' on Mondays. America tried to stop supplies of P.L. 480 wheat and tried to browbeat our country but the farmers of our country accepted the call of Shastriji. The soil of this country and the 'Anna Data' farmer produced so much quantity of foodgrains that they have become self dependent. Now, our farmers do not get full support price of the wheat and today wheat is being imported in our country at a very high price on the plea to keep the price under check. We want those supplies but about the Australian wheat it is said that some seeds and weeds are mixed in them which may breed new unknown plants and it would hamper the production capacity or fertility of our soil. I would like to seek a clarification from the Hon'ble Minister in this regard. I want to know whether the imported wheat is worth eating by the Indian people or will it be that red wheat or some other such material is mixed in it which is detrimental to the health of our people and fertility of our soil. Such spoilt wheat or seed should not be allowed to be imported to our country. With these words, I thank you for giving me time to speak and I conclude my speech.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Mumbai South-Central) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, 40% people of our country are living below poverty line. There is corruption in proving that a particular person is poor and even in obtaining a ration card. The Government had announced on 26th January, 1997 that those people who were living below poverty line would be given 10 kgs. of foodgrains at half the price. But can a family survive on 10 kgs foodgrains? They have to purchase at least 30 kgs. of foodgrains from the open market to fulfil their needs. He had to spend more money on the purchase of additional 30 kg. of foodgrains as compared to the relief being given to him on 10 kgs. of foodgrains. I want that you should reconsider this policy. If you really want to help the poor and are serious, then you have to change the present Machinery of Public Distribution System.

Our colleague, Shri Chackoji was just explaining about the corruption prevalent in the storage system. I think that everybody speak about corruption and say that rotten grains are supplied to the poor everywhere through Public Distribution System. Goods worth crores of rupees are spoiled in storage. You kindly see the figures which are available with you as to how much goods are spoiled due to poor storage system. The extent of goods which

are shown as spoiled are actually not spoiled. Who will keep a watch and check over it. If your machinery is good then the whole system would run smoothly.

I want that the quantity of foodgrains being given under T.P.D.S. should be determined on the basis of the number of the family members because there could be one person in a family and there could be 6-7 persons in a family. Besides, there is corruption in the Ration shops also. Shopkeepers weigh less because he gets less commission. I want the Government to ensure that better quality of foodgrains is made available at the Ration shops. I have been listening to the debate here for the last 3-4 days and every speaker has said here that the foodgrains available at the P.D.S. shops are not even worth eating by animals. I would like that the foodgrains being supplied through fair price shops should be kept in the Central Hall so that everybody may come to know as to what quality of foodgrains our poor people are eating.

Now, I want to give some suggestions through you. Central Govt. supply a fixed quota of foodgrains to State Govts. and the quota is being distributed through fair price shops in Maharashtra. It is a matter of concern that States do not get full allocated quota. A few days back when the elections to the Municipal Corporations were being held in Maharashtra at that time quota of kerosene oil was not provided deliberately. People are not aware of such practices. They think that the State Govt. is responsible for this. They abuse the State Govt. because quota of foodgrains and kerosene were not supplied to them. I want to request through you that due attention should be paid on this situation. Where the poor people may go. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, what the poor people will do if kerosene would not be available. They will use wood and when wood is also not available then how will they cook their food. So, I request that kerosene quota not only for Maharashtra but for all the States should be enhanced.

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, the Union Government have fixed sugar quota on the basis of 1990-91 census. Now, our longevity is 60 years and per person, per month, 425 gram quota of sugar is insufficient. You should also think over it. Hon'ble Prime Minister has also accepted that only 10 Kg. of foodgrains is not sufficient for a single family. He has expressed his concern over it and said that the quantity of foodgrain is very meagre. He himself has said that it is necessary to take some appropriate action for this. The Prime Minister is calling a conference of all the Chief Ministers in this regard. If you are going to hold a conference of Chief Ministers then it should not

be delayed and some decisions should be taken at the earliest. This is a scheme for the benefit of the poor. It should be taken up as soon as possible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I want to give some suggestions before I conclude. I suggest that instead of 10 Kg. at least 30 to 40 Kg. foodgrains should be supplied per month on half price to each family. The shortage in quota to be allocated to the States should be met. Do not supply rotten and decayed foodgrains from the godowns of Food Corporation of India. Corrupt officers of Food Corporation of India should be apprehended immediately and stern punishment be awarded to them. Quota of Sugar should be increased. Commission of the dealers of fair price shops should be enhanced so that they do not sell the foodgrains in blackmarket for their livelihood. Recently, one or two days ago the Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas while giving reply to a question had narrated his experience that adulterated petrol and diesel were also being poured in his car. He slapped the employee at the Petrol pump. Today this is the situation that kerosene oil is not available. Everywhere it reaches in the balckmarket.

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I would like to ask the Govt. through you as to whether the Govt. has conducted any survey regarding the number of poor people who are getting foodgrains. I want to tell you that according to a study 7.8% people in Uttar Pradesh, 7.2% in Bihar, 7.8% in Orissa and 8.2% in Rajasthan are the poor people who are getting benefit under this scheme. I have got data pertaining to these States only. I do not have figures of other states. So, this is my request that there is a need to review the entire existing Public Distribution System so that the poor can be benefitted by it and they do not get rotten and decayed rice and wheat. You have given me a chance to speak, so I thank you and with these words I take my seat.

SHRI DILEEP SINGH BHURIA (Jhabua) : Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I thank you that you have given me permission to speak on this important subject. The Public Distribution System is not a new system for our country. The system has been in continuance since long but this new system was started on 1.6.97 when Shri Devegowda became the Prime Minister. The entire system is a defective one. Earlier, when rate of wheat was Rs. 3.77 per Kg., they increased the rate to Rs. 5.20 per Kg. and now they say that 10 kg. foodgrains would be supplied to each poor family at the rate of Rs. 3.20 per Kg. every month. Are you trying to deceive the Public of our country in this manner? The rates were earlier increased to Rs. 5.20 from Rs. 3.77 and now it is being said that wheat at cheaper rate i.e. Rs. 3.20 per kg. will be supplied to the poor. In the same way the rate of rice

[Shri Dileep Singh Bhuria]

was increased and later on, it was said that people living below the poverty line would be given rice at half of the rate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, there are many large families in our country. The Govt. say that they will supply 10 Kg. foodgrains to each family in a month. Whether this 10 Kg. foodgrain is meant for distributing 'Prasad'. What they will do? Hon'ble Minister, I don't know why Shri Deve Gowda ji handed over this scheme to you and left. Under this scheme so many Ration Cards will be made as a result of which percentage of population living below the poverty line will increase from 30% to 50%. This poverty line is not going to reduce. But the poor labourers and agricultural labourers living in villages are not going to be benefitted by this scheme. A clever person who knows about this scheme will take the benefit. This scheme should be suspended and the earlier scheme should be started under which ration was being distributed in 1700 blocks of tribal areas. All these were SC blocks. How would we give benefit to the poorest among the poor. Earlier the scheme was not applicable on wheat, rice, kerosene oil and sugar. The present scheme is not going to benefit the poor living below poverty line. In this way the poor will become poorer. These things will go to the black market as our friend from Maharashtra was telling about bribery. People are dissatisfied with this scheme. What they will do with this 10 kg. of wheat?

If at that time he would have gone to open market then he would have got atleast 20 kg. wheat in 75 rupees but today if he goes to open market then he would only get a handful of wheat. There is no use of open market. Wheat is being sold in open market at the rate of seven, eight, ten rupees per kg. From where the poor will feed themselves? I would like to thank Panigrahi ji who has brought this scheme. This scheme is very defective. There is a great resentment among the people towards this scheme. Whether it is sold by a dealer or a manager of a society, they don't know which person is below the poverty line. He does not know whether it is Deleep Singh Bhuria's card or Minister's card. Record is neither with the collector nor with the Tehsildar.

Therefore, I would like to say to you that earlier scheme should be re-launched. A committee may be constituted for this scheme, it may be a Parliamentary Committee. Some of your officer have submitted it. It is a game of mathematics. On one side prices were increased and on the other farmers were assured that they would be given half kg. They are so innocent that they neither get half Kg. nor one kg. That goes in black market. Today there is nothing in the godowns. Due to rain there are no food items in the godowns. You want to implement the system of Public Distribution but in our hilly, tribal areas there are many such areas where water

is logging for three months. They cannot reach the village. They have to travel 50 Km. on foot. By the time they reach there, the items are sold in black.

Therefore, I would like to request the Minister that this scheme is very defective. There is great resentment amongst the masses due to this scheme. This scheme must be stopped and the earlier scheme may be restarted and that must be reviewed. Kindly start this scheme after constituting a Committee for this purpose so that the poor people in the country could be benefitted by this. I have concluded within five minutes. I am very thankful to you for having given me time.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, you may try to reply in ten minutes the debate of five hours.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH (Vidisha) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, atleast all the main points raised by hon'ble Members must be covered.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : If time has to be increased it will be increased after 7 O'Clock.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH : Alright, you may increase it.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : I am grateful to you because you have given permission for the scheme of public interest and struggle against poverty. Approximately five hours debate has taken place during three days and about 24 hon'ble Members have given their valuable suggestions and have enlightened the Government. All the Members have given very good suggestions and taken interest in strengthening this scheme and make it more useful for the masses and poor and now the discussion is going to be concluded.

First of all, I would like to start with the line said by Mahatma Gandhi. 'The person who is suffering from hunger and has no other will except to feed himself, his stomach is his God. He, who gives him bread is his God, he can see God in him'. Regarding poor and food, food is the basic requirement of life and all the great men had kept this in mind that poverty in our country is the biggest problem, an ailment and all the great men have talked about fighting this problem.

I remember the poem of Poet Gopal Singh Nepali :

"Din gaye baras gaye
yatna gai nahin,
Rotian garib ki
prarthana bani rahi.
Shyam ki bansi baji
Ram ka dhanush chada
Budh ka gyan bada
Nirdhanta gai nahin."

It means that the attention of poets of Hindustan has also been drawn towards the poverty of the country. They have felt moved by the plight and hunger of poor and they are also concerned about these. But till today as per the Lakadwala Committee, the position in our country is that out of 95 crore of the population, 32 crore were below the poverty line in 1995. Some other calculations have also been carried out. D.R.D.A. has also prepared a list. One more National Sample Survey has been conducted. In all these studies lesser number of people have been mentioned as compared to the Lakadwala Committee. That is why the Government of India and Planning Commission have accepted the report of Expert Group of Lakadwala Committee, that 32 crore of the population is living below poverty line. There are total 16 lakh families. 32 crore of the population are below poverty line and about 6 crore families have been taken into consideration.

When the Government of United Front was formed then people were concerned that Public Distribution System is already there. It is going on quite well in some of the States. But poor people in some of the States do not get foodgrains. That is why this scheme was criticised heavily that poor do not get foodgrains on less prices, which is the cause of increasing poverty. Sometimes poor people have to face starvation. That is why it was the commitment of the Government that no poor in this country should remain hungry, they must get foodgrains. It had been considered and a meeting of all the Chief Ministers of States had taken place in July 1996 in which it was formed that atleast people living below poverty line be provided foodgrains on concessional rates. Initially the people have estimated that they must get about 20 kg. foodgrains per month at concessional rates. But later on in the same meeting the people did not agree because they thought that only the people living below poverty line should be given foodgrains and rest of the people be left to the mercy of market or on the basis of their production. But some people disagreed on that. They were of the opinion that in those States where the persons are above poverty line. Such as Urban areas hilly areas, or where R.P.D.S. was in practice, are given foodgrains and they must not be deprived of the earlier facility which they are getting. Therefore, it was decided in the same meeting that provision be made to give 10 kg. foodgrains, rice or wheat per family to the persons living below poverty line at the half rate of Central Issue Price.

According to that if 10 kg. of foodgrain is distributed to one family then per year nearly 70 lakh tonne foodgrains

will be consumed by 6 crore families living below the poverty line. In this way 6 crore families could get food-grain at half rate. It was decided therein that instead of 70 lakh tonne 175 lakh tonnes grain should be allocated under this item. Out of it, 105 lakh tonne grain should be allocated for A.P.L. at Centre Issue Price. If the people living above poverty line or people of a State desire, they could get their share from 105 lakh tonne and if they would like to give more to the people living below poverty line, they can do so. Therefore, provision of 175 lakh tonne was made in new Targeted Public Distribution System. Only 72 days from 1 June till date *i.e.* 2 months and 12 days have passed. Therefore, it is not correct to say at beginning of a scheme that the scheme has failed, it has not been successful and grain is not reaching the poor people. All the schemes face teething problems in the beginning. There is always a scope for modification, improvement and Government have been benefitted by the suggestions given by the hon'ble members. The hon. Members, Chief Ministers of different States and Hon'ble Minister of Food have drawn the attention of the Prime Minister towards problems of their States 5-6 times. This meeting was held for 5-6 days continuously. Hence, it is not correct to say that this scheme is not tolerable, people have become more poor than before, they have not got any benefit and that the earlier scheme was better.

A total subsidy of Rs. 9200 crores will be given for it. So the amount will be incurred on subsidised grain. It is indeed in favour of the poor and they will be benefitted by it. It is true that arrangement has not been made as per their requirement. But this is a beginning that benefits of this scheme should reach the targeted people. The target has been fixed under Revamped Public Distribution System to extend benefits of this very scheme to all 1700 block any hilly blocks.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Orders have been given to change ration cards without preparation.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : At least poor people of all the areas may get benefits of the revamped P.D.S. and target has been fixed for them. The poor is one who is below the poverty line, has no sufficient food to eat, no clothes to wear, no house to live in, no facility or education for his children and no facility of medicine if somebody in his family falls ill. Such a person can be called a person living below poverty line. Therefore, it was decided that this grain must reach all the poor people living in different parts of the country. The provision has been made to provide 105 lakh tonne as per calculation of 70 lakh tonne. This was implemented under revamped P.D.S. as per calculation. Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat ji has said that nothing has been done in regard to cards. The

[Shri Raghuvans Prasad Singh]

Government have paid attention to it. Each State was contacted. One officer from the Centre visited each State in March-April, 1996 to ensure that a separate card is made for people. If this work can not be done immediately, put a seal on their old cards. But State Governments gave much cooperation.

19.00 hrs.

Certain States have completed the work by making red cards, blue cards, green cards for the people living below the poverty line but some States are lagging behind. This scheme has been implemented in all States except four States.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : If House agrees, can we extend the time for another 15 minutes.

SOME HON'BLE MEMBERS : It may be extended.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : All the State Governments have given full cooperation but four State Governments i.e. Delhi, Punjab, Goa and Lakshdweep have not implemented this scheme in their respective States but they have promised to implement it within two-three months. The beginning of implementing this scheme in remaining States has been started and they have started to lift the grain allocated to them. Instructions have been issued to constitute monitoring committee at each level in each State. State Governments have said that monitoring committees have been constituted or are being constituted but I accept the suggestion made by hon'ble members. I share the concern expressed by the hon'ble members that bungling can take place at lower level, therefore, the hon'ble Member or their representatives will essentially be included in monitoring committee so that they could know the factual position.

In the Conference of Chief Ministers, it was decided as to how much share of grain will be allocated to each State. In the last year each State used to get allocation of grain as per their demand. Some States lifted the grain and some did not. It was decided therein that the quantity of grains lifted in ten years will be treated as average share of grain of that State and it will have to be taken by each State. Some States got lesser share as per the off-take of grain during previous year. All these States are exaggerating the case and making the demand for a targeted Public Distribution System. The consumption of grain under the earlier system last year should be increased and not decreased. Therefore, I think that their complaint is justified. I agree with it. When this complaint was brought to the notice of Prime Minister, he intervened and informed the House that the problems

of States would be sorted out by amending it so that poor people may get more grain. Now, we are aware of the problems of States.

I would like to express a lot of thanks to hon'ble Panigrahi who drew the attention of the House to this important issue and did such an important work. He has raised the issue of Orissa in a very rational and vigorous way.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Your reply is also vigorous.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : He raised the issue of Orissa as the hon'ble Members from Kerala raised the issue of Kerala. Last year the offtake of Orissa was 10 lakh tonne but according to formula, average offtake of 10 years is 4 lakh and 23 thousand tonne. Orissa wanted 3 lakh 81 thousands tonne grain for the people living below the poverty line, therefore, it was allocated 4 lakh 23 thousand tonnes in addition to 44 thousand tonne under APL. There was a problem and we received the information and State Government demanded more rice. We asked, how much rice did they want? They said that they wanted one lakh tonne rice. Then we sanctioned an additional quota of 20 thousand tonne rice per month for five months.

Then it was decided that wheat instead of rice should be given. Recently seven or eight days ago it was decided to supply wheat and it was directed that 20,000 tonnes of additional wheat should be supplied to them. Though Orissa is a surplus State and the production there is for more than the cost per capita.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Its famine is well known.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : There has been famine in some districts. Thus they placed the demand of rice on that ground. Hence they were given 1 lakh tonne additional quantity of rice. Then 60 lakh tonne additional wheat at the rate of 20 lakh tonne per month was supplied. But Shri Panigrahi says that it was as per APL and BPL rate, but the Cabinet decided to give supply at economic rate. Shares were given as per the formula adopted. Additional allocation will be made on economic rate. We have supplied foodgrain at economic rate as demanded, but there they are raising the question of APL and BPL. In Orissa we have sanctioned 35 thousand tonnes of foodgrain for the people living below poverty line, but 30 thousand tonnes has been taken. We have given 35 thousand tonnes of wheat but 20 thousand tonnes has been taken. Similarly there has been no off-take under APL and BPL under new scheme. We have made an allocation of 14 lakh tonnes per month in the country, but only 11 lakh tonnes have

been taken, three lakh tonnes have not been taken. We have got no record of the month of July. Some States have sent the record, but not all the States, 14 lakh tonnes was allocated at BPL and APL rates but 11 lakh tonnes has been taken. But the Hon. Members says that they should get more foodgrain and that too at APL and BPL rates. But they should see that the foodgrain allocated to the State Govts. should be taken cent-percent, then only the people living below poverty line in the villages could get the foodgrain. Rawatji was saying that either foodgrain does not reach there or its quantity is not adequate. This needs strict vigilance. Therefore where ever the rates have major difference there are chances of bungling. Therefore it also requires equal monitoring, alertness and vigilance, so that the poor can get the foodgrain.

With regard to Orissa or any other State....

SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH (Bellary) : Karnataka?
...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : I have told about Orissa. Allocation has been made more than three times than that of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, there is no scope for Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to raise any question. If I could get the time I will reply all the questions.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon. Minister, please give some replies in writing.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Last year, Kerala lifted 21 lakh tonnes foodgrain. They got 17 lakh tonnes foodgrains. It was short by four lakh tonnes. I appreciate the Govt. of Kerala that they have a good Public Distribution System. Therefore, we do not want to disturb their system. The Central Govt. is all set to improve the system. The system should be poor-oriented and village-oriented and the needy people should get their due. Therefore, we have further allocated the foodgrains so that they could meet their requirement. The off-take of foodgrains which was 17 lakhs, has reached 21 lakh tonnes. Only 10 thousand tonnes would be short. But we have made the arrangements so that we could provide the foodgrains as per the demands of the State Governments.

Sir, we have made allocation for the State Govts. more than their demand, we have allocated 30 thousand tonnes per month for Kerala, 30 thousand tonnes per month for Karnataka, 40 thousand tonnes per month for Orissa, 41 thousand tonnes per month for Rajasthan, 30 thousand tonnes per months for Jammu and Kashmir and 9500 tonnes per month for Himachal Pradesh.
...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Only the members from Karnataka State have asked, others have not asked.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Sir, others will ask, 26,500 tonnes per month for the seven States of North-East, ten thousand tonnes per month for Delhi, five thousand tonnes per month for Haryana, four thousand tonnes per month for Sikkim, ten thousand tonnes per month for Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh had made a demand of five thousand tonnes per month because they had an earthquake at Jabalpur, have been sanctioned.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon. Minister, your time is over.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Sir, I know. Allocation of 20 thousand tonnes was made there. Allocation for advance storage to Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir has been made. In this way, I solve the problems of the State Govts. the same day when either I get the letter of the Chief-Minister, Ministers of Food or the Secretary of the State Govts. or when they themselves come. Because it is the responsibility of the Central Govt. and it has pledged that nobody should starve in any part of the country. It is the responsibility of the Govt. to provide food. Therefore foodgrain is to be distributed. ...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA (Junagarh) : Sir, people are starving in Gujarat, there they get very small quantity of foodgrain. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : According to off-take it is less, but there is not dearth of foodgrain to provide it to the poor. We have enough quantity of foodgrain, we will provide it to them....(Interruptions) whether the poor gets the foodgrain or not, and to ensure it that it reaches them, your co-operation is required. ...(Interruptions).

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Please tell about Maharashtra also. ...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please let him complete. Shri Mohan Rawale please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Maharashtra has been allocated foodgrain for the people living below poverty line. They require only 7 lakh 25 thousand tonnes

[Shri Raghuvans Prasad Singh]

but they have got 14 lakh 89 thousand tonnes, it means they have got 7 lakh 63 thousand tonnes foodgrains for the people living above poverty line also. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Mohan Rawale is satisfied now.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Ten lakh ten thousand tonnes foodgrain has been allocated to Tamilnadu. but they require 5 lakh 49 thousand tonnes foodgrain for the people living below poverty line. Therefore, they have got 4 lakh 61 thousand tonne foodgrains for the people living above poverty line and even then 80 thousand tonnes foodgrains per month is allocated to them in excess. They are purchasing foodgrains at cheaper rates from Andhra Pradesh. We have saved money out of it and that's why we are now supplying foodgrains to other States as well.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon'ble Minister, kindly circulate this pamphlet to the entire Members of Parliament.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : I would like to tell them about kerosene-oil and sugar.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh) : Hon'ble Minister has diligently skipped some of the troublesome areas. The families living below the poverty line, who are known as B.P.L. families.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please do not interrupt.

[English]

Let him reply now.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I am sorry. Please let him reply. The House has to be adjourned; the debate has to be concluded. The Minister may please reply.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : There are 43 lakh B.P.L. families in Orissa but they have shown only 32 lakh and left 11 lakh such families. So, the entire calculation is wrong.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : We have accepted the Lakadwala Committee's recommendation. If

anything is wrong in this figure then you may approach the Planning Commission on that basis. They can tell us after doing the necessary amendments. They have got to decide about the people living below the poverty line. We are ready to provide even after amendments.

[English]

SHRI P.C. CHACKO (Mukundapuram) : Can you assure us that last year's offtake will be given? This kind of arithmetic will not satisfy us. What was the offtake of last year? Can you give us an assurance in this regard?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : He has given the formula.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : We have been able to reach the last year offtake in some of the States but it is excess in some other States. I promise you that we will do our best to achieve the target as per the demands of the States.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Till what time does the House want to sit?

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please let me know till what time the House wants to sit.

AN HON. MEMBER : Fifteen minutes.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No, five minutes. The Minister may conclude within five minutes.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : We have adopted some measures in view of the difficulties faced by State Governments. I think we will be able to allay the apprehension of Shri Panigrahi when we will reconsider it because we are determined to provide poor their due and will see that they get foodgrains.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please, do tell them about kerosene oil as well as sugar. The duration of the House can not be extended time and again. We should conclude now. It does not sound well to ring the bell when Minister is replying.

[English]

But till what time will the House have to be extended?

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the total foodgrain production in our country and its requirement for consumption is 2200 to 2400 calories as per the Medical Science. We provide four hundred and twenty five grams of grains per person, per day. As per this the requirement of foodgrains is eighteen crore tonnes. Total foodgrains production during the last year was 18 crores and 40 lakh tonnes whereas 19 crores and 80 lakh tonnes of foodgrains is likely to be produced this year. On this ground we can say that there will be no dearth of foodgrains anywhere for the poor people. We will streamline our poor oriented policy and make it more successful. This matter pertains to foodgrains. Everybody is concerned about sugar. As per the Sugar Policy every State Government has to be given 425 gram of sugar per head. We have made arrangements to provide this on time. The consumption of sugar in India is around 64 lakh tonnes out of which 3 lakh and 70 thousand tonnes of sugar is distributed through P.D.S. and approximately 60 lakh and a few thousand tonnes of sugar is supplied in free market. That much of sugar stock is available with us. Therefore, there is no shortage of sugar till the month of January, 1999. We keep an eye on black marketing, misappropriation and also keep an eye on irregularities during preparation of ration cards. We provide all that is needed especially to the suppressed people who need these goods most.

Now I want to speak about the Kerosene Oil.

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA: The quality of these commodities is not good.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, please carry on. Please do not interrupt.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Looking into the demand of Kerosene Oil made by the States last time, it is seen that the per capita allocation of Kerosene Oil per year is minimum 7 litres and maximum 12 litres per head ...*(Interruptions)* Law is there to check adulteration and building. Stringent punishment is given to those who make bungling under Essential Commodities Act and culprits are not allowed to go scot free. Poor people are given their due.

The Public Distribution System of India is the largest System in the world. There are four lakh Fair Price Shops. These shops are spread all over the country. We want that every poor people should get foodgrains through it and these shops should be located everywhere and it should be monitored and streamlined. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Time is over. Please conclude.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : We want that every member should co-operate for the success of this scheme. This scheme will be successful if every member of this House co-operate to fulfil the basic needs of life and co-operate to eradicate poverty, starvation and to solve the problem of food. Adequate food is not provided to the 84 crores people. We are concerned about it. I have no doubt that India will emerge victorious out of this problem.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House now stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow at 11.00 a.m.

19.22 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, August 13, 1997/
Shravana 22, 1919 (Saka)*